

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PHNOM 03649 01 OF 02 280421Z

21

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 H-01 INR-05 L-01 PM-03 PRS-01

SP-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 IGA-01 /040 W

----- 089040

R 280330Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9543

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 3649

LIMDIS

SAIGON FOR ASST. SECRETARY HABIB

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MOPS, CB, US

SUBJ: MEETING WITH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERS

REF: PHNOM PENH 3538

1. SUMMARY. AS FORESHADOWED REFTEL, A TWO-HOUR MEETING OF 15 LEADING CIVILIAN AND MILITARY FIGURES WAS HELD AT MY RESIDENCE. AFTER MY OPENING REMARKS PER REFTEL, I STRESSED THE CRUCIAL MANPOWER PROBLEM, AND CINC/FANK SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ APPEARED TO OPEN A FEW CIVILIAN EYES TO THE REAL NATURE OF THE EFFORT OF FANK AND THE CASUALTIES IT HAS SUFFERED. LONG BORET SPOKE ABOUT RESPONSES TO MY SUGGESTIONS OF WAYS TO INCREASE RECRUITING, AND SAID THERE WOULD BE A TRANSFER OF THAT APPARATUS TO HIS OVERALL CHARGE. IT WAS AGREED TO HOLD SIMILAR MEETINGS ON A WEEKLY BASIS, PROBABLY WITH OUR PARTICIPATION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A MEETING HELD AT MY INVITATION, NINE LEADING CIVILIAN AND SIX MILITARY FIGURES GATHERED TO DISCUSS WAYS AND MEANS OF ATTAINING GREATER UNITY OF PURPOSE IN THIS CRITICAL PERIOD. PRESENT ON THE CIVILIAN SIDE WERE PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET, THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PHNOM 03649 01 OF 02 280421Z

AFFAIRS, EDUCATION, HEALTH, INFORMATION, REFUGEES, FINANCE

AND TOURISM, AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND SOCIO-REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADER HANG THUN HAK. THE MILITARY INCLUDED CINC/FANK LTG SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, HIS DEPUTY, THE HEADS OF THE NAVY AND AIR FORCE, THE CHIEF OF ARMY INTELLIGENCE (J-2), AND THE HEAD OF PSYWAR OPERATIONS.

3. I OPENED THE MEETING WITH EXTENDED REMARKS ALONG THE OUTLINE IN REFTEL, HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED FOR UNITY BETWEEN CIVIL AND MILITARY SIDES OF THE GOVERNMENT. I LISTED SPECIFIC MEASURES I HAD PROPOSED TO THE MARSHAL TO STIMULATE RECRUITING. I STRESSED PARTICULARLY THE US DETERMINATION TO SUPPORT THE KHMERS AND OUTLINED THE MANY POSITIVE STEPS WE HAD ALREADY TAKEN AND WERE TAKING IN THIS DIRECTION. I UNDERLINED THE ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT FOR SECURITY OF POCHENTONG AIRPORT, AS WELL AS FOR OPENING THE LOWER MEKONG RIVER. I CITED THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO SPEAKER ALBERT, AND RECENT COMMENT BY THE SECRETARIES OF STATE AND DEFENSE ON THE URGENT NEED FOR ADDITIONAL AID TO CAMBODIA, POINTING TO THE PENDING VISIT ON MARCH 1 OF A CODEL SPECIFICALLY CHARGED WITH EXAMINING THE DESIRABILITY OF SUCH ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE.

4. I ALSO DWELT ON THE CRITICALITY OF THE MANPOWER PROBLEM. THE OTHER SIDE, I SAID, WAGES TOTAL WAR, USING ALL RESOURCES DOWN TO 14-YEAR OLDS AND EVEN FEMALE UNITS. WITH A PRESENT AVERAGE STRENGTH OF THIRTY PERCENT IN THE INTERVENTION UNITS IN FANK, THEY CAN NEVER MOUNT AN OFFENSIVE. THIS IS WHY WE CANNOT KEEP THE ROCKETS OUT OF POCHENTONG. WE DISCUSSED THE RATIONING OF AMMUNITION TO FANK AND KAF REQUIRED BY THE MEKONG CLOSING, AND I EXPLAINED THAT THE TEN DAY DC-8 AIRLIFT HAD PERMITTED BASIC STOCKS TO BE RAISED TO THE POINT WHERE THE FAUCET OF AMMUNITION SUPPLY TO THE UNITS CAN NOW BE TURNED BACK ON, CAUTIOUSLY, TO AROUND 500 TONS A DAY, FROM A LOW OF 300 TO 350 TONS FOR FANK, WITH ANOTHER 40 TO 50 FOR KAF.

5. PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET RESPONDED TO MY PRESENTATION BY SAYING THE MARSHAL HAD REFERRED MY SERIES OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PHNOM 03649 01 OF 02 280421Z

PROPOSALS ON MANPOWER TO THE CABINET, WHICH HAD REACHED THESE DECISIONS:

(A) THE RAISING THE DRAFT AGE LIMIT FROM 35 TO 40, SO AS TO PROVIDE OLDER MEN FOR STATIC DEFENSE POSITIONS TO FREE YOUNGER SOLDIERS FOR COMBAT ROLES, HAD BEEN APPROVED. A DRAFT LAW HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND SENT TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

(B) AN AMNESTY PROGRAM FOR DESERTERS WHO SURRENDER FOR FURTHER SERVICE BEFORE A GIVEN DATE WAS ALSO APPROVED. IT WAS DECIDED THIS COULD BE DONE BY DECREE RATHER THAN LAW. DECREE IS NOW BEING DRAWN UP. THE CABINET WISHES TO EXTEND PRINCIPLE TO COMMON LAW PRISONERS WHO HAVE SERVED A PART OF THEIR SENTENCES, AMOUNTING TO AN AMNESTY FOR MILITARY SERVICE.

(C) EFFORTS TO ENTICE CIVIL SERVANTS INTO MILITARY SERVICE: AGREED. THIS IS SOMETHING THE CABINET CAN HANDLE.

(D) LIFTING OF STUDENT DEFERMENTS. THIS POSES A TOUGHER PROBLEM, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID. CABINET HOPES TO SIDESTEP IT BY INCREASED EFFORTS TO GET VOLUNTEERS FROM THIS GROUP.

(E) EFFORTS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO OBTAIN GVN PERMISSION TO RECRUIT ETHNIC CAMBODIANS IN VIET-NAM (OTHER THAN THOSE ACTUALLY SERVING IN ARVN) TO ENLIST FOR SERVICE ON THE LOWER MEKONG, WHICH IS CLOSE TO THEIR REGIONS OF ORIGIN, OR IS THE AREA FROM WHICH THEY ARE NOW REFUGEES: NEEDS FURTHER STUDY. LTG SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ INTERJECTED TO SAY THIS WAS ALREADY UNDERWAY THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF THE GKR MILITARY ATTACHE IN SAIGON TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THESE PEOPLE.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PHNOM 03649 02 OF 02 280450Z

12

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 H-01 INR-05 L-01 PM-03 PRS-01

SP-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 IGA-01 /040 W

----- 089384

R 280330Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9544

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 3649

LIMDIS

6. LONG BORET THEN SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRST PROBLEM AT THE MOMENT WAS THE EFFORT TO RAISE POPULAR MORALE. THIS INCLUDED EFFORTS TO STEM MALAISE AMONG THE STUDENTS. HE HAD JUST SPENT SEVEN HOURS IN MEETINGS WITH THEIR LEADERS AND THE TEACHERS AND FELT THIS SITUATION WAS CALMER.

7. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE MARSHAL HAD THAT MORNING ORDERED THAT THE RECRUITING APPARATUS OF SMO (SERVICE MILITAIRE OBLIGATOIRE) BE PLACED DIRECTLY UNDER THE PRIME MINISTER (IT HAD BEEN UNDER SOSTHENE'S RESPONSIBILITY, BUT HE HAS BEEN TOO BUSY TO GIVE IT MUCH OF HIS OWN TIME).

8. CINC/FANK THEN GAVE AN ELOQUENT RESUME, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CIVILIANS PRESENT, OF THE EFFORTS AND LOSSES OF THE ARMED FORCES, MAKING THE POINT THAT FANK WAS OBLIGED TO BE SILENT ABOUT THE LOSSES IN ORDER NOT TO INFORM THE ENEMY, OR LOWER FRIENDLY MORALE. HE SAID THE CASUALTIES FROM FEB. 1 TO 20 HAD TOTALED 11,812 OUT OF ACTION, OF WHOM 1,857 WERE KILLED. HE AGAIN MENTIONED THE THIRTY PERCENT AVERAGE STRENGTH FIGURE FOR THE INTERVENTION BRIGADES. WE MIGHT BE FACED WITH THE CHOICE OF HAVING TO GIVE UP ONE OF THE PROVINCES, HE SAID. HOW WAS ONE TO MAKE SUCH A DECISION? WHICH?
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PHNOM 03649 02 OF 02 280450Z

IN THE PROVINCES THEY ARE MOBILIZED FOR AN ALL-OUT EFFORT. IN KAMPOT, NOW UNDER HEAVY ENEMY PRESSURE, EVERYONE IS UNDER ARMS, INCLUDING TEACHERS, ONE OF WHOM WAS KILLED YESTERDAY, AND CIVIL SERVANTS. THEY HAD ASKED FOR ARMS TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE THE MILITARY. WHAT A CONTRAST TO PHNOM PENH, WHERE JOURNALISTS ASK HIM HOW ONE CAN TELL THAT THIS IS A CITY AT WAR WITH THE ENEMY FIVE OR SIX MILES AWAY.

9. ON THE MEKONG, THE NAVY HAS LOST FIFTY PERCENT OF ITS RIVERINE VESSEL CREWS. BUT WE FOUGHT HARD THERE IN JANUARY, DESPITE OUR HEAVY LOSSES UNTIL THE ENEMY BEGAN USING MINES. HE PAID TRIBUTE TO THE COURAGE OF THE AIR FORCE, AND TO THE HELICOPTER PILOTS LANDING UNDER HEAVY FIRE. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE NAVY STILL USES THE MEKONG FOR HALF THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE CITY AND THE BORDER. BUT HE MUST ASK THE GOVERNMENT TO "GIVE US MEN." WE ARE NOW GETTING 150 RECRUITS A DAY, HE SAID, WHILE SENDING 300 A DAY TO THE HOSPITALS WHICH ARE SO OVERFLOWING THAT MANY MILITARY WOUNDED ARE BEING HANDLED IN CIVILIAN HOSPITALS. FINALLY, HE WISHED TO MAKE THIS POINT TO HIS CIVILIAN COLLEAGUES: HAD FANK MADE EVEN ONE MISTAKE AT ANY POINT AROUND THE PHNOM

PENH PERIMETER IN THE 58 DAYS OF THE CURRENT HEAVY FIGHTING, THE ENEMY WOULD HAVE BEEN IN PHNOM PENH AND WOULD HAVE KILLED EVERYONE. HE ASKED THEM TO REFLECT UPON THIS. IT IS EVIDENT THAT THEY DID, AND THAT HIS FRANKNESS HAD A CONSIDERABLE EFFECT UPON THEM.

10. I THEN WOUND UP THE MEETING BY PROPOSING THAT A SIMILAR MEETING BE HELD ON A WEEKLY BASIS, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IT BE DEVOTED TO SEEKING SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS TO SPECIFIC PROBLEMS. WE WOULD ATTEND AS WELL, IF THEY WISHED, BECAUSE THE RESOLUTION OF SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS MIGHT WELL DEPEND UPON WHAT THE US COULD, OR COULD NOT, FURNISH IN THE WAY OF SUPPORT. THERE WERE ALSO AREAS THAT CUT ACROSS BOTH SIDES THAT MIGHT BE EXPEDITIOUSLY DISPOSED OF IN THIS WAY. I CITED THE CASE WHERE REFUGEES MIGHT BE IN NEED OF FOOD IN A CERTAIN AREA AND WHERE THE COOPERATION OF THE MILITARY WOULD BE NEEDED, BOTH TO REPORT THE PROBLEM AND TO HELP

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PHNOM 03649 02 OF 02 280450Z

IN ITS SOLUTION (NEAK LUONG MIGHT BE SUCH A CASE). IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE USEFUL AND THAT THERE WOULD BE CONSULTATIONS TO DETERMINE AN APPROPRIATE TIME IN THE WEEK.

11. COMMENT. IT WAS APPARENT FROM ATTITUDES AT THE MEETING, AND IN THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO ITS BEING HELD, THAT CONSIDERABLE TENSION, SUSPICION AND MISUNDERSTANDING EXISTS BETWEEN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP. THIS IS A PROBLEM ADMITTED BY ALL, AND WAS THE REASON FOR CALLING THE MEETING. HOWEVER, CONTRARY TO THE EXPECTATION OF SOME, ESPECIALLY ON THE CIVILIAN SIDE, THE PROCEEDINGS WERE CALM AND POLITE, AND I BELIEVE SOSTHENE'S SOBERING REMARKS WERE SOMETHING OF AN EYE-OPENER TO THE CIVILIANS. THE PROBLEM IN MANY WAYS BOILS DOWN TO A SIMPLE LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS. THEIR OWN INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES PROVIDE NO REGULAR MECHANISM FOR FOSTERING SUCH EXCHANGE. HENCE MY PROPOSAL OF A NEW AD HOC, INFORMAL METHOD FOR BYPASSING THE SEPARATE AND DISTINCT STRUCTURES ON EACH SIDE. WE WILL GIVE IT A TRY, BUT IT WILL DOUBTLESS TAKE CONTINUAL PRODDING TO MAKE IT WORK. THE GULF IS DEEP.

DEAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSCRIPTION, AMNESTY, PERSONNEL CONDUCT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, MILITARY TRANSPORTATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PHNOM03649
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750070-0495
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975023/aaaaabvs.tel
Line Count: 270
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 PHNOM PENH 3538
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERS
TAGS: PINT, MOPS, CB, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006